

## Hiring a Contractor

Every year, thousands of homeowners are taken advantage of by contractors who do not stay true to their word. By following these simple guidelines, you can prevent becoming a victim to this type of situation. Being able to make an informed decision about who you will hire as your contractor is of great importance.

***NOTE: Currently in North Carolina, an individual is permitted to do work up to \$30,000 without possessing a General Contractors License.***

### **Under \$30,000 - get references**

If your total construction cost for a particular job does not exceed \$30,000, focus your attention on obtaining several references from customers who have dealt with that particular contractor on a business level. Check references of contractor and the superintendent assigned to your job. "A contractor is no better than the superintendent on that job."

### **Over \$30,000 - get license information**

If the total construction cost does exceed \$30,000, require the contractor to supply license information, bonding information, and insurance information. Also check your contractor's references.

### **Obtain a detailed contract**

Be sure that there is a detailed contract explaining all work to be performed and that you receive a copy of the contract to keep for your records.

Be sure that you understand all of the information in the contract. If something is unclear to you, be sure it is fully explained to your satisfaction before any contract is signed.

If a down payment is given to the contractor prior to the beginning of any work, be sure to document this information and make certain that you receive a receipt showing the details of what amount has been paid and what amount will be due upon completion of all work to your satisfaction.

### **Get several estimates - shop around**

Be prepared to get several estimates from qualified contractors. Do not limit yourself to the services of one contractor. Shop around until you are comfortable to make a decision.

### **Get a completion date**

Be sure there is a completion date as to when the proposed work will be finished. Many times this is left out of the contract and the work may have a tendency to get dragged out longer than needed.

### **Need Help?**

If you do not feel qualified to do your own construction observation, get help from a qualified independent Home Inspector, Architect or Engineer.

If you have any questions about this material, standards, or State Building Code requirements, call the **Residential Technical Answer Center (RTAC) at 704-432-RTAC or 704-432-7822.**